

To: Senator Cassano, Representative Lamar and all members of the Transportation Committee.....

**From: Edward R. Johnson, 87 Main Street, Noank Village, Groton, CT 06340
Phone: 860 536 1589 E-mail: ed_johnson@tvconnect.net**

Re: House Bill # 5423 - (concerns expansion of Passenger Train Service, along with Ground Transportation, for Eastern CT)

Date for submission: by Friday 2/19/2021 at 10:00 AM - ZOOM Meeting

I am unable to attend the above ZOOM meeting due to a medical appointment. I am in favor of the passage of Bill 5423, as follows:

1) I have been in favor of rail expansion in CT ever since our family moved here full time in 1978. I supported a "Light Rail" movement back in the 1970's and 1980's when I realized the need for better local transportation efficiency. Hopefully, more progress can be made with this newer, more comprehensive approach.

2) During my 80 years of life, I've lived in Boston, New Haven, Philadelphia, New York City and in NJ suburbs near Newark, before moving to Groton. In all those areas, I witnessed large transportation systems which, in my opinion, far surpassed the quality of mass transportation compared with what I have seen in SE Connecticut. In all cases, rail was a very key factor in the movement of large populations. In many cases, public transportation was more efficient, convenient and less expensive than using private automobiles.

3) H.B. 5423 addresses our local concerns with high traffic congestion and related carbon emissions, and it serves to benefit our commuter traffic especially during peak workload hours. It comes at a time when our transportation needs will increase manifold due to the massive increase in production at Electric Boat in the next several years. This will affect the entire surrounding region which will include New London, Groton Town & City, as well as Ledyard and Stonington.

4) There are two areas requiring attention to rail service expansion, one being East-West and the other being North-South. This would benefit and expand both passenger and freight services to and from our CT area.

a) The first is based on using existing RR tracks in order to expand services offered by the Shore Line East operation into more passenger pick-up/drop off facilities from Westerly, Stonington, Mystic, and Groton to New London. This would also co-ordinate with existing services serving Boston, Providence, New Haven and New York.

b) The second would be to utilize the existing tracks, belonging to Providence-Worcester RR, that presently extend from Groton and the East bank of the Thames River which would initially connect Electric Boat and Pfizer with the Navy

Sub Base. Those same tracks exist north for future commuter and freight expansion which could connect Norwich and then Massachusetts.

c) Both of the above systems have a "tie in" involving 3 parallel tracks in Groton where transfers can be made at Groton in a new station that can be constructed to support the 3 existing tracks.

5) Present vehicle traffic and parking in Groton is already being maxed out during key commuting periods. This is due to a large percentage of EB personnel living outside of Groton. A larger local workforce will create more congestion and carbon emissions, resulting in a negative economic condition. HB 5423 will actually help reduce highway congestion, emissions and road maintenance, even with the anticipated increased workforce.

6) I mentioned that I am now 80 years old. I still want to be able to travel in the northeast region, but would prefer to use public transportation for the simple reason that it will be safer for me than driving a car. I like to live as independently as possible, and am realistic enough to know that driving a car will not be practical for me in a few years.

Obviously, for all of the above reasons, I am in favor of HB 5423. I sincerely hope that it will pass. Thank you all for your time.

Edward R. Johnson

Tuesday, February 16, 2021